

Message Text

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16

ACTION NEA-10

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E.O. 11652: NA

TAGS: PINT, IS

SUBJ: PROPOSAL FOR CABINET RESHUFFLE EVOKES FIRM OPPOSITION

BEGIN SUMMARY: PRESS LEAK THAT PRIME MINISTER WAS CONSIDERING CABINET RESHUFFLE AND CONSOLIDATION OF MINISTRIES HAS PRECIPITATED MINOR POLITICAL STORM. IT SEEMS UNLIKELY THAT REORGANIZATION WILL TAKE PLACE GIVEN STRONG OPPOSITION BY LABOR MINISTER BARAM AND NRP MINISTER HAMMER TO PROPOSAL WHICH WOULD REDUCE THEIR ROLES.
END SUMMARY

1. YEDIOT AHARONOT NOVEMBER 16 LEAKED STORY THAT RABIN WAS GIVING SERIOUS CONSIDERATION TO REORGANIZING GOI PORTFOLIOS IN ACCORDANCE WITH RECOMMENDATIONS OF SPECIAL CABINET COMMITTEE HEADED BY ILP MINISTER HAUSNER. THRUST OF RECOMMENDATIONS WAS TO CONSOLIDATE SEVERAL MINISTRIES AND RELATED PUBLIC OFFICES IN ORDER TO STREAMLINE AND RATIONALIZE GOVERNMENT OPERATIONS AND EFFECT BUDGETARY REDUCTIONS. PLAN REPORTEDLY ENVISAGED A) FORMATION OF NEW MINISTRY OF "SOCIAL BETTERMENT" COMBINING LABOR AND SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRIES WITH NATIONAL INSURANCE NETWORK AND B) TRANSFER OF ALL ASPECTS OF CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITIES, NOW SCATTERED IN SEVERAL MINISTRIES, TO ENLARGED MINISTRY OF HOUSING. RESHUFFLE REPORTEDLY WOULD HAVE INVOLVED ASSIGNMENT OF NEW SOCIAL BETTERMENT MINISTRY TO HEALTH MINISTER SHEMTOV (MAPAM), WITH RECENTLY APPOINTED SOCIAL
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WELFARE MINISTER HAMMER (NRP) TAKING OVER HEALTH MINISTRY AND

LABOR MINISTER BARAM (MAPAI) RECEIVING COMMUNICATIONS PORTFOLIO.

2. PUBLICATION OF RESHUFFLE PROPOSAL INEVITABLY EVOKED MINOR POLITICAL STORN AS MINISTERS AND PARTIES MOVED TO PROTECT THEIR FIEFDOMS. ISRAELI TV NOVEMBER 18 CARRIED REPORT THAT BARAM AND HAMMER REFUSED TO GIVE UP THEIR MINISTRIES AND NRP KNESSSED DELEGATION WOULD CONSIDER RESIGNATION FROM THE COALITION IF RABIN MOVED AHEAD WITH THESE PLANS.

3. MAARIV INTERNAL AFFAIRS CORRESPONDENT (MEISELS) HAS GIVEN US FOLLOWING ACCOUNT OF WHAT HAPPENED. ANTI-RABIN FACTOR, PROBABLY WITHIN LABOR PARTY, LEAKED CONSIDERATION OF RESHUFFLE TO YEDIOT AHARONOT CORRESPONDENT BEFORE RABIN HAS OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS MATTER WITH BARAM OR HAMMER. RABIN'S PURPOSE--BEYOND EFFECTING BADLY NEEDED REFORM OF SPRAWLING GOVERNMENT OPERATION-- WAS TO QUELL INCIPIENT THREAT THAT MAPAM AT 1976 CONVENTION MAY DECIDE TO BREAK AWAY FROM LABOR ALIGNMENT BY GOING PART WAY TOWARD MEETING ITS DEMAND FOR GREATER INFLUENCE IN CABINET. DOWNGRADING OF BARAM WAS STRONGLY OPPOSED BY MAPAI ELEMENTS OF LABOR PARTY WHO FELT THAT THEIR POSTION ALREADY HAD BEEN ERODED IN TRANSITION FROM MEIR TO RABIN GOVERNMENTS. FOR NRP, SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY WAS TRADITIONAL BAILIWICK WHICH IT WAS RELUCTANT TO ABANDON. MEISELS CONCLUDED THAT PREMATURE LEAK SEEMED TO HAVE ACHIEVED ITS PURPOSE OF SCOTCHING WHATEVER CHANCES HAD EXISTED FOR GOING AHEAD WITH REORGANIZATION. (WE NOTE, HOWEVER, THAT DAVAR NOVEMBER20 REPORTS RABIN STILL INTENDS TO GO AHEAD WITH SOME FORM OF REORGANIZATION.)

4. COMMENT: UPROAR OVER POSSIBLE RESHUFFLE AND CONSOLIDATION OF MINISTRIES IS LATEST ILLUSTRATION OF SHORTCOMINGS IN ISRAEL'S MULTIPARTY, MULTIFACTION PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM. WHILE SENSITIVITIES HAVE BEEN RUFFLED, WE DO NOT ANTICIPATE A CABINET CRISIS. TOON

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